

MODULE 3:

PRACTICE AND PLAY



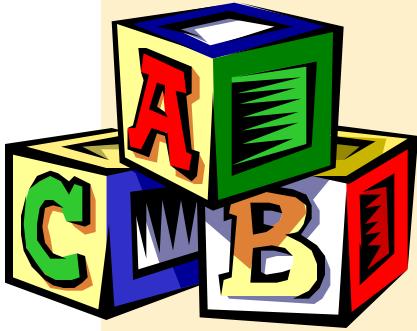
Play is the context for learning



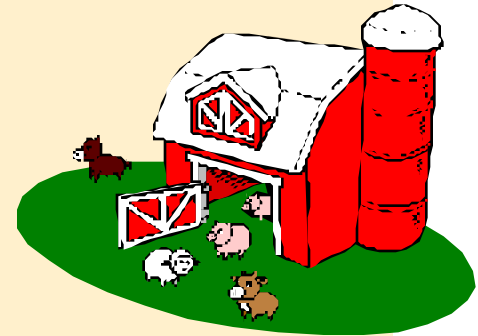
- Experiencing the world is a young child's work.
- Play is the route to experiencing the world.
- Play connects the physical world with the world of ideas and symbols.
- Play is a zone of proximal development.

Types of Play

functional



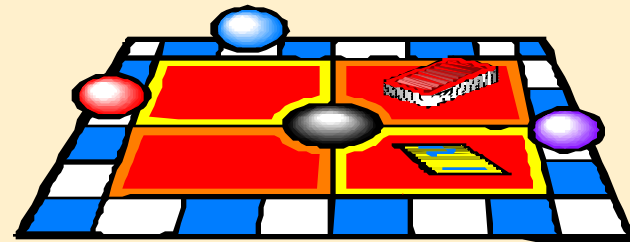
constructive



sociodramatic

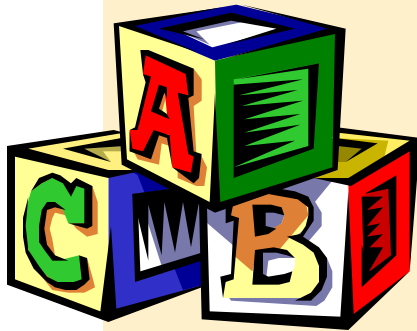


games with rules



Types of Play

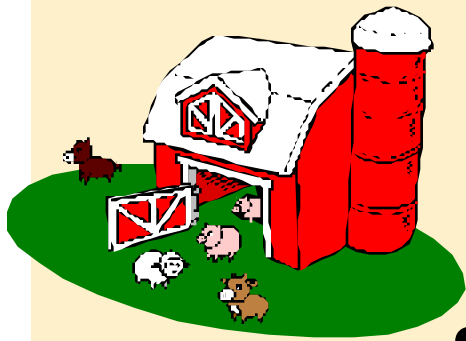
functional



- Simple play with objects as objects (not pretending they are something else)
- Banging, dropping, mouthing (putting in mouth)

Types of Play

constructive



- Play with objects to construct a representation of something
- Build with objects (e.g., towers or houses with blocks)

Types of Play

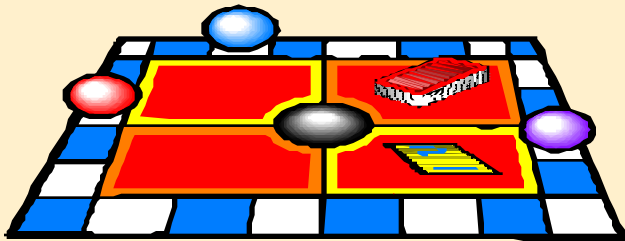
sociodramatic



- Act out social roles
- Play house or school

Types of Play

games with rules



- Play “formal” games with rules
- Play board games or invented games

MODULE 3:



Practice that is fun builds positive inclinations toward reading and writing.

MODULE 3:

Even Start National Evaluation Findings

- Compared to Head Start, Even Start classes scored lower on the Literacy Checklist (a measure of reading and writing resources).
- Most Even Start classrooms had books displayed and books were accessible to children. All had a library or reading corner and an area for writing.



MODULE 3:

Even Start National Evaluation Findings

- Literacy activities available in Even Start classrooms were similar to Head Start. However, Even Start children are more likely to work on letters of the alphabet and words.
- There was less frequency of book reading in Even Start classrooms (3x week) than Head Start (5x week).



MODULE 3:

Practice, Practice, Practice

Learn, practice, and make automatic.



Skill Examples:

- button buttons
- recognize printed name
- name letters of the alphabet

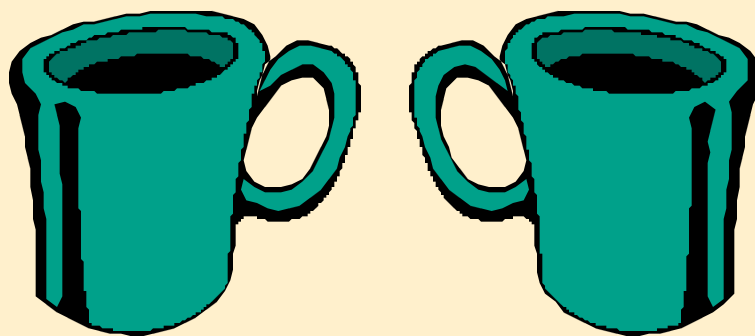
MODULE 3:

Knowing a letter is complex:

- **Letter-ness** (not a number, picture or scribble)
- **Shape** (orientation is fixed, some look alike in different orientations)
- **Name** of letter
- Upper and lower **case** have same name and sound
- **Formats** of type vary
- Connect **symbol to sound**



MODULE 3:



b

d

MODULE 3:

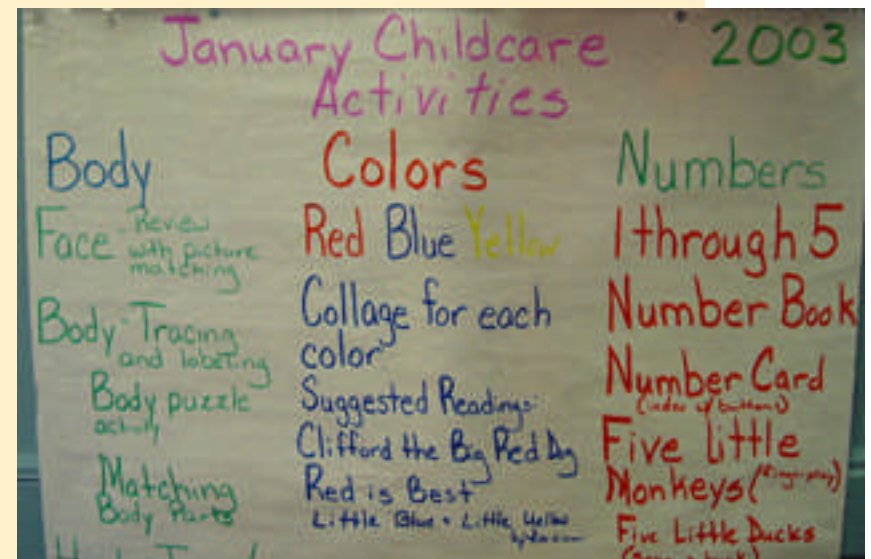
Teacher's role in play and practice:

- Create adequate time, space, materials and flexible groups
- Develop rich content (preparatory experiences, prompts, materials)
- Set up environments for extended focused play
- Provide range of fun practice activities
- Be ready to coach children to focus and engage them

MODULE 3:

Create Adequate Opportunities

- overall time available
- time for play
- indoor/outdoor play
- different groupings
- props



Organizing a Print-Rich Environment for Play



- Written words and signs
- Alphabet charts
- Letter puzzles
- Picture books and other books
- Magnetic letters
- Writing tools and paper
- Grown-up materials: menus, order books, eye charts, newspapers, road signs

MODULE 3:

Arrange the Environment for Pre-Writing

- Develop themes of interest
- Set up center for writing and incorporate writing materials in all centers
- Write week and day plans together with children- and read it back to follow it
- Arrange time for dictation about stories that happened in play



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Setting up language-rich play opportunities requires:

- Knowing your children's **interests and needs**
- Understanding children's **cultural** and **linguistic** backgrounds
- Knowing what your children are likely to have **experienced** and what they may not be familiar with

Setting up language-rich play opportunities (continued):

- Knowing the **developmental sequence** of language and literacy skills
- Simultaneously setting up opportunities for children at **different stages** of development
- Supporting and building on children's **initiations**

MODULE 3:

Advance planning means that as a teacher you can spend time with children talking and listening.



MODULE 3:

Take advantage of spontaneous occasions

- Model “writing” a note to a parent
- Child asks how to write a letter or word
- Child makes up a silly word
- Label a child’s drawing
- Notice a word in a book read aloud
- Imitation of role models for reading and writing
- Favorite games and songs



MODULE 3:

Teach and practice alphabet knowledge through



- imaginative and playful activities
- planned, explicit instruction
- spontaneous everyday activity / teachable moments
- the print-rich environment
- fine motor activities

MODULE 3:



- Cultural perspectives on play and English language learners
- Extra support for some children

Implications: Role of Supervisors in Supporting Practice and Play



- **Weekly discussion** with staff to assess progress and enhance plans
- **Ask staff** what they want from supervisor, e.g., observation and feedback, help on plans, coaching on difficult issue
- **Reflective questioning** of staff to guide thinking about children
- Add **new practices/strategies** to teacher's repertoire

MODULE 3:

Implications: Practice and Play with Parents

- Help **parents** identify their own **attitudes** about the place of play and practice in learning
- **Share information** about how play leads to literacy learning
- Point out in **home situations** how play can be enhanced



Practice and Play with Parents

- Use **parent-child time** for guiding practice
- Help parents **observe** play
- Add **new practices/strategies** to parent's repertoire
- **Demonstrate, model, apply**
- Coach and provide **feedback**

Summary: Where should you see the contributions of play?



- Pretend reading
- Pretend writing
- Use of symbols
- Acting out comprehension of read-alouds
- Making up experiences to write down with the teacher

MODULE 3:

Links to Other Even Start Components

Parenting Education:

Address the importance of play in providing opportunities to practice and apply learning.

Parent-Child Interaction:

Help parents engage in beginning writing and dictation activities and alphabet games.

Adult Education:

Practice forms of writing, compare English language rules to other languages, engage in learning games with other adults and children.